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The Use of Candid Camera Films to Illustrate Psychological Concepts in Introductory Psychology.

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A one semester teaching practicum for graduate students inaugurated at the Cornell University Psychology Department has provided for the development of sophisticated educational materials to supplement teacher presentations. To date, the most ambitious project has been to develop some of the vast material on human behavior in the national television and radio archives into teaching and research materials for the social sciences. Specifically, a program was initiated to make use of footage from the television show, "Candid Camera." With the co-operation and financial assistance of Allen Funt, a pilot project utilizing five years of film was undertaken. Graduate teaching fellows and undergraduates wrote descriptions of film content and cataloged, when possible, the sequences into a psychological taxonomy. These sequences were then used to develop two to four minute single concept films illustrating already well established psychological concepts. Sequences were also used to develop longer films explaining a theory or concept in psychology. These films bring empirical evidence from a natural setting into the psychology classroom. The pilot project was successful and the entire "Candid Camera" collection is being cataloged. Those interested in the films, which are restricted to educational use, should contact Prof. James Maas, Dept. of Psychology, 326 Morrill Hall, Cornell Univ., Ithaca, N.Y. 14850. (MT)

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The Use of Candid Camera Films to Illustrate Psychological Concepts in Introductory Psychology.

James B. Maas

Since 1965 the Department of Psychology at Cornell University has conducted a one-semester teaching practicum for its graduate students. The primary objective of this program is to improve the quality of undergraduate education by providing beginning teachers with three fundamental, and hopefully meaningful, experiences: First, actual instructional responsibilities, which consists of teaching five introductory psychology discussion sections per week; secondly, a weekly seminar on teaching which involves, among other activities, reviewing videotapes of each teaching fellow's discussion sections; and lastly, a challenging assignment to develop sophisticated educational materials designed to supplement teachers' presentations of concepts and concomitantly increase teaching effectiveness. My topic this morning centers on one of many ventures created in response to this last charge.

The possibilities for fruitful projects are infinite. Within the last two years students in the practicum have initiated, or contributed to, three substantial innovations. The first culminated in the production of 300 color 35mm slides for use in teaching general psychology; our published set is now being used in 570 colleges and universities. The second involved research in measuring teaching effectiveness, and resulted in the development of a standardized 53-item rating form, the Cornell University Inventory for Student Appraisal of Teaching and Courses. The voluntary use of this

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instrument by Cornell faculty has been gratifying. The third project, the one I wish to describe this morning, is without doubt our most ambitious undertaking to date. Its genesis was to be found in discussions we had concerning the lack of audio-visual materials available for effectively illustrating psychological concepts, or more specifically, principles of spontaneous human behavior. We realized that there was a weighty mass of teaching and research material on human behavior almost untouched by social scientists, that could be found in the archives of national radio and television shows, which have kept disc, film and tape recordings of radio and television programs over the years. Our attention immediately turned to a popular television show wherein over a million people were filmed unobtrusively "in the act of being themselves," thus falling victim to Allen A. Funt's "SMILE...you're on CANDID CAMERA." In the Fall of 1966 Mr. Funt was presented with our proposal for an exploratory project which would evaluate the potential uses of Candid Camera films for teaching and research in the behavioral sciences. He loaned us 5 years of films (or 332 sequences) and gave us $10,000 to cover expenses.

The graduate teaching fellows, assisted by paid undergraduates, began the arduous task of writing descriptions of film content and cataloging the sequences, where possible, into a psychological taxonomy. In addition to recording the data on age, sex and number of subjects in each sequence, the films are classified into general categories such as: perception, learning, motivation, and social psychology. There is further codification within each of these categories. For example, "social psychology" is subdivided into conformity, obedience to authority, help-giving, and social perception.

Our next step was to develop a series of 2 to 4 minute single-concept films. These are, in essence, single Candid Camera episodes chosen to illustrate, in a spontaneous "naturalistic" setting, psychological concepts already well-established in the literature through empirical laboratory or field research. We found that much of the material needed little or no editing from the original television footage, other than the addition of introductory and/or summary commentary on the psychological relevance of the particular sequence. We have produced 10 of these concept films to date, and anticipate this number will grow rapidly within the coming year.

In addition to the concept films, we have seen possibilities for teaching films that cover larger units of material, and illustrate broad theories of behavior. As a pilot project in this area, we have recently completed a 20-minute film on "conformity Behavior," which analyzes conformity in terms of its functional importance to an individual in society. The film utilizes a number of Candid Camera sequences to illustrate specific concepts of theoretical importance; interspersed with these scenes are commentary, graphs and diagrams on experiments related to conformity behavior. The Candid Camera collection, with its vast amount of footage, would seem to lend itself to more films of this nature.

Before I show a few samples from the collection, let me provide some information pertaining to the general parameters of the show and its production. First, the Candid Camera television program, which is no longer being produced, contained approximately 1 foot of film per 100 feet exposed. In other terms, the program featured one person for every 11 people filmed in a given situation. Unfortunately for behavioral scientists, only the footage used on television has been saved over the years.

Secondly, although the primary criterion for using a given person or sequence on the air was "entertainment value," most of the footage used represented typical, rather than atypical, responses in a specific situation. Mr. Funt acknowledges, "If we tried something and found only one person in a hundred responding the way we thought was either interesting or funny, we would loathe to use it, because we don't believe it's going to be funny to the general audience and we don't think it's going to be believed. On the other hand, even if we don't think it's going to be believed, but everybody seems to do it, we'll have the courage to use it." Funt adds, however, that "extremes are the best subjects...the very young, the very old, the very rich, the very poor, the very urban, and the very rural." This best describes who we see on the program. Thirdly, the number of subjects who were unwilling to sign releases for television rights, was exceedingly low: about 1/10th of one percent of the people who were filmed. Lastly, if a value judgment had to be made regarding the best sequences for scientific purposes, one finds the earlier programs less "gimmicky" than the later shows, and the childrens' sequences more natural than those involving adults.

It would be impossible to show you, in the space of a few minutes, an adequate cross-section of the collection. The films range, for example, from natural to unnatural situations, from serious to slapstick, from young to old, from Manhattan to Moscow, from silent to sound, and from black-and-white to color. Instead, I have opted to show you, in succession, four sequences that are conceptually related to a single topic, that of conformity. We have used all four films as single-concept sequences; the first two are also included in our "Conformity Behavior" film.

The first sequence you will see is entitled "Elevator," and

illustrates the Asch phenomenon of group pressure; three Candid Camera stooges are shown affecting the behavior of a naive subject by facing the rear of an elevator, and later, the side.

The second sequence, "Invisible Rope," shows a subject confronted with contradictory evidence. Two Candid Camera men act as if they are holding a rope stretched across a sidewalk. Another Candid Camera man comes along and steps over the rope that isn't really there. Thus, social information indicates the presence of a rope, whereas there is no physical indication of it. This presents a conflict which forces the subject to make a judgment, and demonstrates the phenomenon of conformity in such a predicament.

The third sequence, "Walk Backwards Zone," combines the concepts of "conformity" and "obedience to authority." Candid Camera men approach a sidewalk sign instructing them to turn and walk backwards in a specified zone. Note what happens to naive subjects who see both the sign and the action taken by the stooges.

The last sequence, "Space Doctor," deals with another aspect of conformity behavior, that of acquiescence. In this situation a Candid Camera interviewer asks respondents how they like "Space Doctor," a non-existent, purely hypothetical television program. The film succinctly illustrates some basic pitfalls of public-opinion polling, especially the use of loaded questions, followed by response biases committed to please interviewers.

(SHOW FILMS HERE)

I presently use 10 single-concept Candid Camera sequences, and the 20-minute Conformity Behavior film, in my one-semester introductory course.

The films seem to command attention, without being overly entertaining or distracting. In fact, when one removes the canned laughter, even the funniest of scenes becomes a serious object of study for students who have been adequately prepared to note specific phenomena. The films make essential points clearly, without absorbing an inordinate amount of valuable lecture time. In addition to demonstrating various concepts, the films have also been used as practice stimuli for teaching methods of observing and coding interaction. Furthermore, the films have a certain heuristic value in that students frequently suggest experiments after viewing Candid Camera situations. One interesting sidelight evolved this summer when three of my students found themselves in the University Library elevator with a graduate student, who was a stranger to all three. Spontaneously, without signal, the three budding psychologists turned to face the rear of the elevator--and became amused witnesses to a perfect replication of Mr. Funt's endeavors.

I asked the 450 students in my course last Spring to evaluate the Candid Camera films they had seen. As Table I indicates, the students found the films informative ($\overline{X}$ = 4.2 on a 5 pt. scale), effective ($\overline{X}$ = 4.6), and overall, worthwhile ($\overline{X}$ = 3.9). Responses to these items were highly intercorrelated. The feeling that the films were worthwhile did not correlate with grades, but did correlate significantly with feeling that the course demanded independent thinking and feeling that the course itself was worthwhile.

(HANDOUT FIGURES HERE)

The films have not only been a success as supplemental teaching material, but are also being effectively utilized as a valuable source of research data. The collection's research possibilities in terms of advantages

and disadvantages, and our current Candid Camera studies on facial expression in emotion (which I am doing with Kathleen Toivanen), are discussed in a forthcoming Psychology Today article. The exploratory research evidently demonstrated positive results to Mr. Funt, to the extent that he has now generously donated his Candid Camera collection, and 10 years of Candid Microphone recordings, to the Department. We are now establishing a permanent Allen Funt Library, and our immediate plans call for cataloging the remainder of the collection, publishing a descriptive brochure, and making films available to other educators and researchers on a cost basis. Furthermore, researchers who so desire will be able to review any aspect of the collection by visiting Cornell. Additionally, we will be asking Mr. Funt to consider presenting seminars from time to time on techniques of making unobtrusive recordings of spontaneous human behaviors. We see this as only the beginning, and would welcome any suggestions from you as to ways in which the collection might be more effectively utilized by behavioral scientists.

The Use of CANDID CAMERA Films to Illustrate Psychological Concepts in Introductory Psychology*

James B. Maas
Cornell University

Rate the Candid Ca mera films on the following items, using a 5 point scale:

I. Did you feel that the films were informative in demonstrating specific psychological concepts?
   1= useless
   5= extremely informative
   Mean = 4.24
   S.D. = .71
   N = 450

2. How effective were the films in demonstrating specific psychological concepts?
   1= very ineffective
   5= very effective
   Mean = 4.66
   S.D. = .51
   N = 450

3. Overall, did you feel that the films were worthwhile?
   1= useless
   5= extremely worthwhile
   Mean = 3.96
   S.D. = .89
   N = 450

Item	r with "Were the films worthwhile?"	
Informative value of films	.61	
Effectiveness of films	.40	
Grade in course	.00	
Cumulative grade average	-.01	N = 450
Independent thinking demanded in course	.23	
Overall opinion of course	.26	

Those wishing to receive Candid Ca mera catalogs should address requests to: Prof. James Maas, Department of Psychology, 326 Morrill Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York 14850. A mominal charge to cover printing costs will be specified before requests are filled. Films will be restricted to educational use only.

* Paper presented at the American Psychological Association Annual Meeting, September 31, 1968, San Francisco.